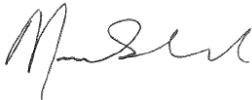




# COMMUNICATION UPDATE

<b>TO:</b>	Mayor and Members City Council
<b>DATE:</b>	October 2, 2025
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Commencement of the Comprehensive Review of the Revitalizing Hamilton's Commercial Districts Community Improvement Plan and Associated Grant and Loan Programs
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	Wards 1,2,3,4,5,6,8,11,13 and 15
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Norm Schleeahn Director, Economic Development Planning and Economic Development Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

The purpose of this Communication Update is to advise Council that Economic Development Division staff have commenced a comprehensive review of the current Revitalizing Hamilton's Commercial Districts Community Improvement Plan and its associated Grant and Loan Programs. This update will also provide information about current and upcoming community and stakeholder engagement/outreach.

## Background

The Revitalizing Hamilton's Commercial Districts Community Improvement Plan (the Plan), and the Loan and Grant Programs (the Programs) provide an economic catalyst to incentivize and/or overcome financial barriers for development (or reinvestment in properties) in support of City goals and objectives. The Plan more specifically encourages business and property owners/tenants to do the following things:

- Enhance the maintenance, functionality, viability, accessibility, and aesthetics of existing commercial, mixed-use commercial buildings;
- Incentivize redevelopment/investment that supports the revitalization of strategic commercial districts; and,
- Incentivize the development of new housing in strategic commercial districts to bring more people into the areas to add vibrancy and create new demand for existing and new commercial amenities and businesses.

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OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

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The Plan consists of 13 different incentive programs available across parts of the City including Downtown Hamilton, the Community Downtowns of Ancaster, Binbrook, Dundas, Stoney Creek and Waterdown, Business Improvement Areas, the Mount Hope/Airport Gateway area as well as various strategic commercial corridors. These eligible areas are formalized in the City's Commercial Improvement Project Area by-law no. 21-163.

Each program targets a specific purpose and geographic area because commercial districts across the City have not experienced the same levels of investment or success, despite their collective importance to the City's prosperity. For example, lower-city commercial areas face distinct barriers compared with suburban commercial centres given the larger supply of an older building stock and smaller, less adaptable floorplates. Those physical constraints can push tenants to relocate to suburban locations and this is more a reflection of the condition of the buildings, not a lack of consumer demand. This underscores a need to update the existing stock so that contemporary commercial uses can be accommodated along these commercial districts.

The Plan and its Programs currently provide a framework for revitalizing these strategic urban commercial districts by minimizing financial barriers and stimulating new private sector investment. Two of the Programs in the Plan include tax increment grant programs: the Revitalizing Hamilton Tax Increment Grant and the Barton/Kenilworth Tax increment Grant. These two programs have resulted in \$26.00 in private sector investment leveraged for every dollar of grant money provided, resulting in over \$28,000,000 in new municipal property taxes generated from completed developments.

### **Comprehensive Plan Review and Engagement**

The City's community improvement plans are all on a five-year comprehensive review schedule that ensures the plans, and their programs continue to be relevant. The Plan was last reviewed in 2020 with the proposed staff amendments approved in 2021 by City Council. As such, the next review is now scheduled to commence. Staff have initiated this comprehensive review with the goal of identifying recommendations for Program changes and updates, if required, that will:

- Ensure the Programs are providing property owners with effective and meaningful financial incentives to encourage private sector investment and reinvestment in properties;
- Further support new investment and assessment growth in our non-residential assessment;

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- Continue to be financially sustainable for the City; and,
- Further align the Plan and Programs with community priorities, and Council priorities, that support any relevant strategic initiatives being undertaken by the City.

Further, in accordance with Council direction given as part of the 2021 comprehensive review of this Plan, staff are also specifically reviewing whether the Downtown and Barton/Kenilworth Housing Opportunities Program should cease to be made available within the Downtown Hamilton Community Improvement Project Area taking into consideration the progress and timing of the Hamilton Light Rail Transit project.

### **Engagement**

Stakeholder and public consultations have commenced and will include:

- The creation of the project's Engage Hamilton page at [www.engage.hamilton.ca/](http://www.engage.hamilton.ca/) where the public and stakeholders can learn more about the review, its goals, fill out a survey, ask questions and make suggestions to the project team. Through this webpage, the public will also be kept apprised of scheduled public consultation events and project milestones;
- Outreach and one-on-one meetings with key internal and external stakeholders. These discussions will continue throughout the review period from now until March 2026;
- A virtual public meeting to be scheduled for a date in November to hear community and stakeholder feedback and ideas. A second public meeting is planned for January 2026 (or early February 2026) to present staff's initial ideas/changes for feedback. This also provides the public, including community and business leaders, a second opportunity to participate if they weren't able to for the first meeting;
- Attending the Business Improvement Area Subcommittee on November 18, 2025;
- Attending the City Builders meeting (formerly Development Industry Liaison Group) on the soonest scheduled 2026 date (schedule still to be released); and,
- A social media campaign on both the City of Hamilton and Economic Development's Invest in Hamilton social channels.

Staff currently anticipate bringing recommendations for program changes forward for Council consideration in April 2026.

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associated Loan and Grant Programs - Page 4 of 4**

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For more information or to discuss any questions or ideas for the review, please reach out to the project lead Johnpaul Loiacono, Senior Project Manager – Urban Renewal at [johnpaul.loiacono@hamilton.ca](mailto:johnpaul.loiacono@hamilton.ca)

**APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

Not applicable.